

I want to commend my colleague, the gentleman from Alaska [Mr. YOUNG], chairman of the Committee on Resources, and the ranking member, the gentleman from California [Mr. MILLER] for their recent efforts to craft a bipartisan bill.

This process has been supported by the involvement of my friend [Mr. DINGELL] as well as the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. TAUZIN] and the gentleman from California [Mr. POMBO].

We must set aside partisan politics. We must set aside personal interest and do what is right for the people of this country and for the species which this legislation protects.

HONEST TAXPAYING CITIZENS SHOULD NOT HAVE TO FEAR IRS

(Mr. HEFLEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HEFLEY. Mr. Speaker, how many honest American citizens are going to be terrorized by the IRS before the IRS changes the way it does business?

Everyone knows that it is not just the tax cheats who panic when the IRS comes around to conduct an audit. Ordinary American citizens who pay taxes are driven to panic as well. It should not be that way.

Tax cheats should feel the cold, unrelenting power of the IRS when their misdeeds are found out, but honest citizens who do their best to comply with an extremely complicated Tax Code should have nothing to fear from an audit.

But the IRS knows that many people who work for a living, who have family obligations, and are living from paycheck to paycheck do not have either the time or the money to do battle with the IRS when the auditors want to play hard ball. IRS agents know that and they can count on that advantage.

But an ordinary citizen who is not a tax cheat simply does not have the money to pay for all the legal leadership necessary to defend himself against the IRS. It is not a fair fight. It is a recipe for abuse and it must stop.

SUPPORT PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

(Ms. VELÁZQUEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. VELÁZQUEZ. Mr. Speaker, our public schools are under attack. Across the country there are students trying to learn in conditions that we should be ashamed of: crumbling walls, leaky roofs, and overcrowding.

The Republicans' response to this crisis is amazing. They want to take money out of the public school system and give it to private schools.

A recent poll shows that the vast majority of Americans oppose Republicans' attempt to use tax dollars for

private schools. The American people want to be able to provide all our children with a first class public education, but the Republicans do not. They want to allow public schools to continue to deteriorate while using taxpayers' dollars to subsidize private schools.

Mr. Speaker, we must not allow the Republicans to tear down our public school system. We must continue our commitment to providing every child in this country with a quality education.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR REAL ACTION IN REFORMING IRS

(Mr. JONES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, the Internal Revenue Service is bullying the American taxpayer, and it is time for this practice to stop.

I appreciate what my colleagues in both the Senate and the House have done to look into this problem with the IRS. Now it is time for real action. The Congress needs to build on the current momentum and take advantage of this opportunity for true tax reform.

To police the tax system, our government employs over 110,000 IRS agents at an annual cost of \$9.8 billion a year. A fair, simpler tax system would eliminate the need for this tremendous and unethical bureaucracy.

The American taxpayers have known this for years, that the IRS needs drastic reform. Now it is time for the Congress to help the taxpayers of America and simplify the Tax Code. Let us give the taxpayers the relief they deserve.

CONGRESS SHOULD NOT ABANDON OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

(Mr. RODRIGUEZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, they are at it again. The House majority has planned to help only a select few of the students that exist. Nine out of ten students attend our public school system. Once again, 9 out of 10 students attend our public school systems. We have to be responsive to those individuals, and our obligation as elected officials is to those people that attend our public school system.

We have to assure that they have the resources. We have to make sure our teachers have the training that is required. We have to make sure that our buildings are adequate and, at the same time, we have to make sure that they have access to the latest technology.

As taxpayers, our obligation is to the public schools, not to the private or religious schools. The majority's plan to abandon our public schools is not an option. Vouchers are not the answer. Abandoning our public schools will only make it worse.

What we need is a commitment of repairing our buildings, a commitment to our students that are out there, commitment to our teachers, a commitment to our communities. We must work for all our students that are out there. Let us not abandon our schools.

CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM IS ALIVE

(Mr. HUTCHINSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. HUTCHINSON. Mr. Speaker, some individuals have misinterpreted yesterday's vote in the Senate as an indication that campaign finance reform is dead. I think they are deceiving themselves. There was no knockout punch. It was a draw.

Campaign finance reform is alive and it is a golden opportunity for the House and our House colleagues to prove that. The spotlight will turn to the House and whether we can follow through on our promises to take the electoral process out of the hands of the highest bidder and put it back in the hands of the American bidder.

I applaud Speaker GINGRICH's comments that he will give campaign finance reform its due in the House, and the gentleman from California [Mr. THOMAS] for asserting that he will hold hearings on the reform effort and examine the different campaign finance bills, including the bill introduced by myself and my friend, the gentleman from Maine, [Mr. TOM ALLEN].

Mr. Speaker, there has been some heated debate on this issue. Let us take that debate out of the pages of the newspapers and put it on the floor of the House of Representatives. Let us make it an open debate, hear all the sides, hear the viewpoints, and decide which direction we are going; and, Mr. Speaker, after that debate, then we can decide just how our campaigns should be run, by the highest bidder or by the American public.

VOTE "YES" ON FARR AMENDMENT TO H.R. 901

(Mr. FARR of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. FARR of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning because the second vote we are going to take today is on H.R. 901, and I have an amendment to that bill that is on the floor. It is the second vote we will take. It amends the Land Sovereignty Act.

I rise as a private landowner to urge my colleagues to protect private property rights. I rise as a former county supervisor to ask my colleagues to protect local control. I rise as a former member of the State legislature to ask my colleagues to protect State rights. And I rise as a Member of Congress to ask my colleagues to vote for that amendment to protect our information sources.